Palm Sunday.

THEME:- ENTERING THE SHADOW.

SP. AIM:- The Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem had but the semblance of triumph; in reality, it was His deliberate surrender to certain death.

1. We are accustomed to describe the Final Entry into Jerusalem as the triumphal procession of a conquering ruler and, by means of it, to surround Jesus with a kingly nimbus. In one of the parks of the Spanish capitol, Madrid, stands a statue of the city's patron saint, about the neck of which hangs a rare and valuable ring set with pearls and diamonds. It is never stolen for nobody wants it, because everyone who ever wore it died--Mercedes, Queen Christina, Infanta del Pillar, and others. It is known as "The Ring of Death". The waving of palms, the strewing of branches, and leaves, the spreading of garments, and the shoutings of "Hosanna to the Son of David" are but the diamond flashes from the "The Ring of Death". If this be the halo of Christ's glory, how great is its darkness!

2. Already the chief priests and the Pharisees have held a council of conspiracy against Him who raised Lazarus from the dead. Notices were posted thruout the city commanding that h

manding that His presence in Jerusalem be disclosed to the authorities as assoon as discovered. Groups of people having read the order wondered if Jesus dared to make His appearance, and constantly looked for Him, for they were eager to see this man who had done such mighty works. As the Jews gathered together from all parts of Palestine and the Dispersion, the story of His wonderful ministry in Galilee quickly spread. Surcharged with expectancy and possible excitement, the vast crouds became so much inflamable material, dangerous if brot near a match. Jesus fully realized the gravity of the situation and therefore retired to Bethany, in the home of Mary and Martha.

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3. As soon as He was discovered to be with Lazarus, many of the Jews walked the half-mile over the Mount of Olives to see the man who had been raised from the dead, as well as his savior. When consequently many more believed, the chief priests took counsel that they might put Lazarus also to death. Our Lord was fully aware by this time that, should He fall into the hands of the Jewish authorities, there could but one fate await Him. Likewise He knew ~~what to expect from the multitudes of the people~~.

what might befall Him at the mercy of the crowd. He had had dealings with them before. Did not the five ~~two~~ thousand whom He fed seek to take Him by force to make Him their king?

4. Were we still in doubt as to Christ's purpose at this time we ~~should~~ 2 need but to recall to mind the many times He spoke to His disciples concerning His crucifixion and death. At the close of His Galilean ministry "when the days were well nigh come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem." On the way (up) the Master took His disciples apart and told them "We go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully treated, and spit upon: and they shall scourge and kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again."

5. Not as one who has already triumphed but as one who starts out to conquer does Christ enter Jerusalem. The great Teacher Has finished proclaiming His doctrines

and explaining the nature and principles of the Kingdom of God. He has sufficiently demonstrated the power of the Kingdom to heal the sick, to cleanse the corrupted, and to raise the dead. By silence and by implications He has caused some to regard Him as their long-looked-for Messiah. But Jesus has not yet established Himself upon the throne of His Kingdom as the recognized ruler of mankind. He must first conquer His enemies in the world--Might, the usurper of Right; Selfishness and Pride, the corruptors of God's Love; and finally the arch-enemy of humanity, Sin's Death.

6. The Final Entry into Jerusalem discloses the equipment and plan of campaign that is to carry Jesus thru seeming defeat to ultimate victory. Let us examine these carefully, for they furnish the key to a comprehensive and sympathetic understanding of the Savior's Passion.

7. Jesus mounts an ass and rides into Jerusalem--accomplished His disciples, the inflammable crowds, and His enemies do the rest. But see what significance attaches itself to this simple procedure when taken as the enactment of Zec-

~~Karl Kuhs~~

hariah's prophecy:

9-10 "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold thy king will come to thee:
Vindicated and victorious is he,
Humble, and riding upon an ass,
Upon the foal of an ass.
He shall cut off chariots from Ephriam,
And horses from Jerusalem;
The battle-bow shall also be cut off,
And he shall speak peace to the nations;
His rule shall be from sea to sea,
From the river to the ends of the earth."

What king is this and what manner of warfare does he employ who,"Humble,and riding upon an ass", deliberately enters the camp of his enemies and surrenders himself to their murderous purposes? Lo, it is the Prince of Peace, who, as such, stills the enemy and the avenger and gains the crown of Peace, auréoled in the effulgent glory of world-wide justice and equity, mercy and love. Behold,

it is the Savior of the world, who, in His victory over Death, humanifies God and deifies humanity; and who, in His atonement, makes inevitable the Brotherhood of Man and the Fatherhood of God.

8. But how does Jesus accomplish such an inconceivable transformation of human nature? We are led to the answer thru the word translated "humble" in the prophecy of Zechariah. In the original it means "poverty-stricken and persecuted because of personal piety". One who obeys God so faithfully as to bring upon himself the emnity and condemnation of evil-doers and hypocrites. Why will the multitudes who hail Jesus as king today help crucify Him tomorrow? How shall we account for the hostile attitude of perverted and conventionalized Judaism? What means this base conspiracy to take the ~~Messiah's life~~ life of the Messiah? Jesus is the Christ, the true lover of God and humanity, who ever faithfully does the will of His Father in the service of His fellow men. So long as there is evil and insincerity in the world a faithful man of God must needs be a suffering servant. The Suffering Servant of Isaiah, in whom is idealized the

experiences of the prophets and of the remnant composing the true Israel, most perfectly portrays Jesus Christ, the Crucified Savior.

"Behold, my servant shall prosper,
He shall be raised up and highly exalted.
Even as many were appalled at him,
So shall many nations tremble,
Kings will close their mouths at him,
not
When what has been told them they see,
And what they have not heard they perceive.

"Who believed what has been reported to us,
And to whom was Jehovah's might revealed?
For he grew up before us as a young shoot,
And as a root out of dry ground.

"He had no form that we should regard him,
Nor appearance that we should delight in him.
His appearance was more disfigured than any man's,
And his form than any human being's.

"~~He was~~

"He was despised and forsaken of men,
A man of suffering and acquainted with sickness;
Like one from whom men hide their face,
He was despised so that we esteemed him not.

"Surely our sickness he himself bore,
And our sufferings--he carried them,
Yet we ourselves esteemed him stricken,
Smitten of God and afflicted.

"But he was wounded for our transgressions,
Crushed because of our iniquities;
The chastisement for our well-being was upon him,
And thru his stripes healing came to us.

"All of us like sheep, had gone astray,
We had turned each to his own way;
While Jehovah made to light upon him
The guilt of us all.

"Yet when afflicted he opened not his mouth;
Like a lamb led to the slaughter,

And like a sheep dumb before her shearers,
So he opened not his mouth.

"By an oppressive judgment was he taken away,
Yet who of his generation considered
That he had been cut off from the land of the living;
For our transgressions had been stricken to death?

"And his grave was made with the wicked,
And among evil-doers his burial mound,
Altho he had done no violence,
Neither was deceit in his mouth.

"Yet Jehovah was pleased to crush him;
Thru giving himself as an offering for guilt,
He shall see posterity and length of days,
And the pleasure of Jehovah will be realized in his (hands:
Out of his own suffering he shall see light,
He shall be satisfied with his knowledge.

"My righteous servant shall make many righteous,
And himself will bear the burden of their iniquities.
~~Therefore will I give him~~ a

Therefore will I give him a portion among the great,
And with the strong shall he divide spoil,
Because he poured out his life-blood,
And was numbered with the transgressors,
And himself bore the sins of many,
And interposed for transgressors."

9. Jesus, then, enters Jerusalem as "The Man of Sorrows" going to his suffering and death. There is no joy of triumph in His heart. Christ is not deceived by the demonstrations of royal welcome accorded Him by the people. He but uses the crowds as a means to His end, as also He uses His persecutors. No jubilant gleam flashes from the eyes of Him who is being hailed as the King of the Jews. Realizing the impulsive fickleness of the mob-mind, He sees their profferred crown of glory change into the crown of thorns, as one steriopticon image blends into another.

10. Contrary to what we might expect, it is not His own cross that causes our King His chief suffering. As the procession rounded the southern point of the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem came suddenly into full view. Luke tells

us that"when He drew nigh, He saw the city and wept over it, saying,

"Hadst thou known in this day, even thou,
The things which belong unto peace;
But now they are hid from thine eyes!
For the days will soon come unto thee,
When thy enemies bank thee about,
And enclose thee on every side.
They shall dash thee at last to the ground,
And thy children with thee.
Not one stone upon another shall they leave.
The day of thy grace thou didst not know."

Oh the depth of divine love in these self-forgetful tears of the Man of Sorrows! Jesus wept, not that they were about to crucify Him, but because He would save them from destruction, and their children whom He tenderly loved, but they would not.

11. Jesus passes into the shadow of His sufferings and death by giving Himself over to the people and the authorities. They will crown Him with hosannas and

thorns; they will mock Him and spit upon Him; they will scourge Him and crush Him until He becomes marred and disfugured, the most despised and forsaken of men: but, like a lamb led to the slaughter, He will not resist nor complain. They will drag Him out of their city amid hateful jeerings, and crucify Him until every drop of blood is poured out of His mutilated body: but, out of His sufferings He shall see light--on the third day He shall rise again! And in His light THEY shall see light! In like manner we all war against God. We break His will and mar His appearance; we mutilate His Truth and crush His Love---we grossly misrepresent Him and make Him a God so hideous that men despise Him and forsake Him. This is how God suffers His way into our lives, and this is how we suffer our way into God's Truth and Righteousness and Love! The old life must suffer and die before it can arise into the strength and beauty and fulness of a more perfect being.

12. Jesus Christ, in order to save us must enter the shadow of death that is cast by our sinning against God.

Shall we not go with Him this week into His sufferings and death--for they are ours? Hiding ourselves in His Life shall we not be resurrected ~~this week~~ with Him unto a life of peace and joy, of faithful service and obedient love? By our unfaithfulness and indifference this past ~~yr~~ year we have been disfuguring the Christ we claim to follow; by our selfishness and petty meanness we have been falsifying Christ before our loved ones and friends and fellow men; by our stubborn narrowness of mind and refusal to learn further we have crushed God's Truth in Christ and in ourselves: shall we not, this week, crucify these malformed Christs of our own sinning and permit the true Lord and Saviour rise in their steads? By the grace of God may we all enter the Shadow with Jesus. Amen.